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## CURRENT EDUCATIONAL LITERATURE.

*Formal Linguistic Culture through Instruction in the Mother-Tongue.*

DIRECTOR DR. VÖLCKER. Central-Organ für die Interessen des Real-schulwesens. Heft VII. July, 1893.

Dr. V. in the first place opposes the common assumption that the fundamental conceptions of grammar are best taught through the Latin. If we are to assume that a foreign language is superior to the vernacular for teaching the fundamental grammatical conceptions, the French, Dr. V. holds, must be accounted better for the purpose than the Latin. The prevalent view is that in Latin the learning of grammatical conceptions is made easy by the fact that in the Latin endings grammatical relations are expressed in visible form. But a great difficulty for the beginner is that a single form in the German frequently has to do duty for a variety of forms in the Latin. So too the beginner has to learn five declensions where one would suffice to express the grammatical relation. The same is true of the conjugations and the vast number of irregular forms which interfere with the quick and clear perception of the underlying thought. The persistent delusion that Latin alone can provide the basis for language instruction in the Gymnasium depends upon a confusion between grammatical and logical relations. All which we comprehend under the idea of the grammatical categories, depends upon a difference of meaning, not of form. In a foreign speech the more clearly the significance of the categories is expressed, the more easily is it grasped by the pupil. Now, in Latin the significance of the categories is very hard to learn because the logical relations are concealed for the most part behind many grammatical relations.

It is, Dr. V. proceeds to say, one of the fundamental errors of our pedagogy to confound the understanding of grammatical relations expressed in language forms with acquaintance with the original word-forms or with the knowledge of their phonetic changes.

That it is only through the medium of the mother-tongue that the knowledge of grammatical concepts is reached, is shown by experience, for the Latin teacher employs the mother-tongue as an illustration to explain these grammatical conceptions in their application to the Latin. The general signification and the inner connection of language forms he alone comprehends who has realized them to himself in the language in which he does his own thinking. It is only in the vernacular that the relation between content and expression is immediate for the pupil.

Dr. V. condemns as premature, and so mechanical, the refinements of grammatical analysis, *e.g.*, the classification and memorizing of the various kinds of attributes. So the teacher should depend upon the growing mental power of the pupil to master the categories. Through the gradual development of linguistic power in the mother-tongue and the clearing of ideas accompanying it, they will in the natural course of development be understood; their employment, which was at first unconscious, will gradually be transformed into conscious knowledge of them.

Even cultivated people are masters of only a part of their mother tongue, inasmuch as the words never stand for definite ideas current in the same degree of clearness among all speakers. If the use of the mother-tongue among educated adults leads so easily to misunderstandings, it is the chief task of the school to see that the pupil rightly apprehends the ideas embod-

ied in words. After suggesting the various means by which this may be attained Dr. V. remarks upon the necessity of caring for the pronunciation of German as a national duty. Among cultivated people hardly one is so careless of the pronunciation of the mother-tongue as the German, hardly one so careful as the French. As a corrective of this fault the study of French is recommended.

Speech and thought are inseparable and so for the school the principle holds good that the entire mental development proceeds hand in hand with the mother-tongue. That an impression may be translated into language, it must be clearly defined in consciousness. It is accordingly the task of the teacher so to explain the reading lesson and bring it within the comprehension of the pupils, that they shall feel themselves transported to the point of view from which the author has chosen the verbal expression, so they shall feel the point and appropriateness of the words to express the author's meaning; and this effect will be produced in the degree that the language of the reading lesson is that of a masterpiece.

The teacher should give before the class a careful reading of the piece. Then should follow an analysis and explanation. In the lower classes the pupils should give simple reproductions of the piece. In the intermediate classes there should follow statements of the contents, abstracts, and descriptions. The essentials should be seized upon. Conciseness and clearness of expression are the qualities desired.

Poetry is of especial value for strengthening the language sense, but regard for practical literature has led to a pedagogical one-sidedness. Scientific prose has been almost wholly banished from the school. This should be remedied by employing extracts from the great scientific writers, particularly those of stylistic excellence.

So far Dr. V. has discussed only that part of education which aims at perception and knowledge, but more important is that which seeks to call forth the pupil's activity. Knowledge must be translated into action.

Oral expression and written exercises afford the field for the exercise of the pupil's powers. The requirement that not only in the German recitation, but in all the work of instruction the pupil be trained to the right use of the mother-tongue is as evident as its fulfillment is difficult. The demands of the subject-matter make it impossible for even the best teacher everywhere and at every time to give the necessary time and attention to the care of form. Particularly in full classes the difficulties are very great. Essay work hitherto, Dr. V. continues, has not to any particular extent furthered the development of the linguistic sense nor resulted in securing clearness of ideas, because the compositions very frequently suffered from a certain formalism, resulting chiefly from the influence of philosophy, the relation of the school to the church, and the imitation of Latin models. After discussing these influences Dr. V. pauses to condemn a kind of essay work which by the making of phrases, and by transcriptions from histories of literature and other ill-understood "authorities" has produced an inflated style which German education must strive to counteract. It is a kind of sophistical performance to allow pupils without any self impulse thereto to write about chance topics of every period. They should write only of that which belongs to their own sphere of activity, that for which they have a personal interest and to which they sustain a necessary relation. Too often, even up to the work of the highest classes, the essays are merely an exercise of the memory. The art of essay work consists in having the pupil put into words that which he has himself seen, felt, and thought. Composition work should grow out of the oral accounts which pupils should give of the subjects of which they are master. "To have the pupil talk again and again of the things he understands, that," says Dr. V. quoting Hildebrand, "is the right method by which to proceed to composition." Hitherto procedure has suffered from the great mistake that material for composition has been to a greater or less extent artificially introduced merely for

the purpose of having it written about. But words must forsake the boy, if he quits his habitual line of thought, which ever affords his unembarrassed speech an abundance of material for working over. Pupils must write from their experience; but their experience comes to them essentially from their training in school. What they have received from their own perception and observation, what under the guidance of their special teacher they have appropriated to themselves and transformed, that they can give oral accounts of and also set forth in writing. The essay thus from the lowest grade up ought not to be treated merely as an artificial literary performance to be practiced only in the course of instruction; the thoroughgoing separation between oral and written discourse must cease.

To portray that which is essential, concrete, vividly and unambiguously, is not easy, every lack of clearness in speech is immediately noticeable; word and thing must correspond in the exactest way, and what in the oral discourse seems clear to the hearer often appears unsound when we examine the written words.

Formal culture may well be called the skill clearly to group and set forth involved matters of fact and to exhibit their conformity to law. It includes the faculty of making accurate and many-sided observation, the ability to distinguish unerringly between the essential and the unessential, sureness in investigation, exposition, and proof. The way to attain this skill is through practice in all these forms of mental activity. Now the exercises to which the facts and problems of the natural sciences furnish the material, are of no less importance for our youth, than those which the linguistic-historical education offers. At any rate practice in both spheres is necessary.

This part of his discussion, which is to be continued, Dr. V. concludes with the statement: "We must demand for all classes of the higher school a daily recitation in German."

F. H. Howard.

*Primary Teachers and Secondary Education.* The Schoolmaster, (London) July 8, 1893.)

"Concert and system," wrote Matthew Arnold, and the phrase may well stand as the *mot d'ordre* of the day. There is a striving towards system and concert in rational public education. The seventies saw the establishment of the Primary School as a national concern; the eighties saw its development and amendment; the nineties will see its correlation and federation with the secondary school, the technical and science school, the school of art, and perhaps the university. English education has long been "without form and void," but now the time of concert and system is at hand.

So long as the public elementary school has been treated as a thing apart anything like correlation and federation has seemed impossible. We have long advocated this ideal as the organ of the National Union of Teachers, and now it seems within measurable distance. The President of the Union raised the demand for concert and system at Liverpool the other day, and its Secretary more recently at Oxford.

There must be no finality and no abrupt termination to the professional development and elevation of the certificated teacher. Just as the higher schools shall not cater for the higher classes alone, so the best schools shall be open to the best teachers, from whatever grade or source they come. Care must be taken that social and pecuniary prejudices shall not have all the say in determining the state organization of the secondary school.

We insist that Secondary Education shall be developed organically and symmetrically out of Primary Education; that there shall be a career in Secondary institutions for the best teachers from Primary Schools; upon

unity and continuity, concert and system, for the schools; upon unity and continuity for the teaching profession. The danger ahead is the drawing a hard and fast line of demarcation.

From partial returns we learn that there are in England and Wales forty-nine Higher Grade Board Schools actually established, and eleven others in course of construction. There are also certain Higher Grade Voluntary Schools; and in several towns where no reorganized Higher Grade Schools exist (as in London, Liverpool, and Newcastle), there are many schools which include in the curriculum instruction in science and art. About fifty thousand pupils are provided for in the Higher Grade Schools, and higher instruction in Science and Art is imparted to at least two hundred thousand. There are twenty-seven organized Science Schools. The teachers employed in this work are nearly all certificated teachers. The most enlightened men and women in the reorganized Secondary Schools condemn the enemies of system and continuity, and heartily support the idea of unity in the profession. In the coming parliamentary and national discussion of the problem we urge the teachers of the State Schools of the country to keep the whole question of the organization of Secondary Education as prominently to the fore as they are doing at this moment.

*O. B. Rhodes.*

*The Philosophy of Education.* The Educational Times, (Holborn, W. C.), July, 1893. p. 300.

During the past session a course of five lectures on the Philosophy of Education was given, to those members of the Johns Hopkins University who are engaged in teaching or who expect to become teachers, by William T. Harris, LL.D., Commissioner of Education of the United States. The Commissioner has favored us with a copy of the lectures, and the following is an abstract:

#### LECTURE II.—PROBLEMS PECULIAR TO AMERICAN EDUCATION.

There are two kinds of education. The first may be called substantial education—the education by means of the memory; the education which gives to the individual methods and habits and the fundamentals of knowledge. It is this education which the child begins to receive from its birth. This sort of education is education by authority—that is, the individual accepts the authority of the teacher for the truth of what he is told, and does not question it or seek to obtain insight into the reason for its being so. It is this education by authority—the education of the past—that the modern or second kind of education seeks to supersede. This second kind may be called individual or scientific education; it is the education of insight as opposed to that of authority. When this kind of education is acquired, it frees the individual from the authority of the other. Under the system of education by authority, when told, for instance, that the sum of three angles of a triangle is equal to two right angles, this will be blindly believed only as long as authority sanctions this belief; but when an insight into the reason for this geometrical truth is obtained, no change of authority is able to make the individual doubt. But there is this danger in the system of education by insight, if begun too early, that the individual tends to become so self-conceited with what he considers knowledge gotten by his own personal thought and research, that he drifts toward empty agnosticism with the casting overboard of all authority. It is therefore necessary that this excessive conceit of self which this modern scientific method of education fosters, be lessened by building on the safe foundations of what has been described as the education of authority. The problems of the reform movement centre, therefore, on the proper method of replacing this authoritative or passive method of education by education through self-activity.

There is another problem—that of the method of study. Germany advises us to teach by oral methods, by giving pieces of information and insight orally by word of mouth. But the American educators have blundered upon what may be defended as the correct method, namely, the text-book method. It was merely the outcome of an unconscious trend. The method is of course liable to very serious abuse, but the good points greatly outweigh the bad. It has the advantage of making one independent of his teacher, you can take your book wherever you please. You cannot do that with the great lecturer, neither can you question him as you can the book, nor can you select the time for hearing the great teacher talk as you can for reading the book; and it is true that nearly all the great teachers have embodied their ideas in books. The greatest danger of text-book education is verbatim, parrot-like recitation; but even then from the poorest text-book a great deal of knowledge can be gleaned. Then there is the alertness which in any large class will necessarily be engendered by an intelligent understanding and criticism of the results arrived at by different pupils in discussing a certain piece of work given in his own words. And then there is the advantage to be found in the fact that with the text-book the child can be busy by itself. Lastly, there is the problem of discipline. There should be very little corporal punishment; the milder forms of restraint should be used. The child that is brought up accustomed to rods loses his self-respect and may become the man who must have police surveillance. Silence, punctuality, regularity, and industry are fundamental parts of a "substantial education" as much as the critical study of mathematics, literature, science, and history is a part of the "education of insight." These two kinds of education, that of authority and that of self-activity, should be made complementary.

*A Model Library.* The Evening Post, New York, August 14, 1893.

An excellent educational exhibit at the World's Fair is that of a popular library shown by the Bureau of Education in the United States Building. The books composing it form a part of a selection of 5,230 volumes, made by a committee of the American Library Association "who passed upon the suggestion of about seventy-five librarians and specialists." They are the gifts of the respective publishers, American and foreign, and will, at the close of the Exposition, be deposited permanently with the Bureau of Education at Washington. The "A. L. A." has provided three catalogues of which two are given in the recent pamphlet issue No. 200 of the Bureau. Whenever it is desired to found a public library of the size indicated there is ready to hand in these catalogues not only a good working list of books, logically grouped, with date of publication, name and address of publisher, and price, but also, "the proper class numbers, dictionary headings, and author entries"—in other words, a model for arranging on the shelves and cataloguing. Women graduates of the New York State Library School at Albany have borne the brunt of this disinterested labor. Biography and Fiction have been set apart in advance of the classifications. Juvenile publications are not separated from the mass. Standard works are often supplemented by popular abridgements, so that a ready choice is afforded if the full list prove too costly. Owners of private libraries will also find their account for stocking purposes, in this intelligent selection.

*O. B. R.*